

## **FARM GATE ROUNDUP Saturday 11 August 2007**

**David Mason: 4588 2144 (W); 4572 1337 (H); 0411 128 456**

**Interviewer: Simon Marnie – Live on-air**

### **Lots of excitement and activity here at the moment David**

There is a great sense of anticipation by the stall holders as they set up. It's hard to believe that it was 5 years ago in August 2002 that we held our first Farmers and Gourmet Food Market here at Castle Hill.

### **Hawkesbury Harvest has come a long way since then**

We have come a long way since the idea of Hawkesbury Harvest was hatched in 2000 when a group of local people came together to work out how we might be able to ensure how agriculture and its associated land use would remain as part of Sydney's culture.

### **Traditionally the Hawkesbury has been the bread basket of Sydney**

Governor Macquarie established the five Macquarie town of Windsor, Richmond, Pitt Town, Wilberforce and Castlereagh between 1810 and 1822. The newly established Sydney Cove was facing starvation and a solution had to be found. Governor Macquarie realised that if the new colony was to survive it had to be able to feed itself. In a very short time the settlement of Sydney was able to do just that. In the 200 years since then Sydney has established itself as a leading international city along with other leading cities such as Paris, New York, London, Toronto and Vancouver. What I found when I travelled the world on my Churchill study tour last year was that those cities are asking and answering the question as to the importance of a local food system to their sustainability.

So today's agriculture is responding to urbanisation and while starvation is not necessarily a threat there are many other social, economic and environmental reasons why local agriculture is still important to all these cities.

### **So Hawkesbury Harvest is essentially leading the way on this in Sydney**

Yes and it is doing it by providing a range of alternative direct marketing options such as the Farm Gate Trail, Farmers Markets, Open Farm Days and we are currently setting up a provedore service. It is also doing it by the great support we get from many private and public sources including the media and in particular you Simon. I have no doubt in my mind that there is a strong and increasing demand in the Sydney community for Sydney to have its own sustainable food system.

**And HH is preparing to open a new Farmers and Fine Food Market at the new Rouse Hill Town Centre**

The Town Centre opens later this year and our first market will be in March 2008. What this demonstrates Simon is how seemingly incompatible interests such as an organisation like HH that seeks to retain land for agriculture and an organisation that requires land for development can come together and find common ground so that both can benefit. We have developed a partnership with the Land Lease/GPT group and it is looking good. Also as part of that partnership is the government through Landcom. So this is a local/regional community based organisation, a global organisation and local and state government coming together - I think it is the way forward. There are so many good things such as corporate social responsibility and the development of relationships between producers and consumers etc imbedded in this - I think it is just great.

## **Community Announcements**

### **So what is future for Hawkesbury Harvest?**

I think Hawkesbury Harvest has the potential to meet the needs of Sydney's evolving urban society in this day and age particularly where people are increasingly concerned about things such as global warming, human health, environmental health, natural disasters and loss of land to urbanisation and associated sterilisation and fragmentation of agricultural land particularly on the coastal belt of Australia and the effect these factors could have on our food supply.. There is lots of discussion about need for shelter and need for water – there is less consideration given to the need for quality fresh local food in Australia but I sense that is changing. If you think about it, it is the third foot of the survival triangle – shelter, water and food. It is an important issue in Europe and Nth America due to things such as foot and mouth disease, mad cow disease and Chernobyl. It is an important issue in Cuba which when the communist block collapsed they lost the support of East Germany on whom Cuba's food system was very much dependent. Cuba is now virtually self sufficient in food much of which occurs in association with urban areas.

### **Hawkesbury Harvest is showing that agriculture can strengthen its position by linking with things like tourism - for example the Farm Gate Trail**

There are so many disciplines that local agriculture can link with Simon such as the wellness industry, ecology, landscape, city design (wall and roof top vegetation), water reuse, organic waste recycling, and agribusiness generally. Hawkesbury Harvest's vision extends to this level of involvement.

**Thanks David – to read what we have spoken about this morning and find out what is happening on the FGT go to**

[www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au](http://www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au)